

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1 to 28 as follows. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~combining digital image meta-data~~ by augmenting meta-data associated with a digital image, wherein the meta-data comprises at least one meta-data element, the method comprising:

~~storing~~ adding a self-describing attribute tags with one or more tag to each meta-data element, wherein each such attribute tag added to a meta-data element describing the describes an action to be taken with this performed on the meta-data element, and a similarly identified meta-data element from a second digital image when another digital image, in a case where the two images are combined.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the self describing attribute tags ~~include~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data elements in question should be discarded when in a case where the two images are combined.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the self describing attribute tags ~~include~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data elements in question should both be kept when in a case where the two images are combined.

4. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the self describing attribute tags ~~include~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data elements in question should be kept as a single element when their in a case where values of the meta-data elements are the same, else and discarded, when in a case where the two images are combined.

5. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein in the event a ~~said~~ the image has associated therewith a ~~said~~ meta-data element having no self describing attribute tag, then the method further comprises the step of:

supplying a default self describing attribute tag to ~~said~~ the meta-data element which has no self describing attribute tag.

6. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the default attribute tag ~~includes~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data elements in question should be kept as a single element, when their in a case where values of the meta-data elements are the same, else and discarded, when in a case where the images are combined.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~updating meta-data of an digital image by~~ augmenting meta-data associated with a digital image, wherein the meta-data comprises at least one meta-data element, the method comprising:

~~storing~~ adding a self describing attribute tags ~~with one or more to each meta-data elements element, wherein each such attribute tag added to a meta-data element~~

describes an ~~describing the action to be taken with this~~ performed on the meta-data element when in a case where the digital image is transformed.

8. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the self describing attribute tags ~~include~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data elements in question should be discarded when in a case where the image is transformed.

9. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the self describing attribute tags ~~include~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data elements in question should be kept when in a case where the image is transformed.

10. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein in the event ~~said~~ the image has associated therewith a ~~said~~ meta-data element having no attribute tag, then the method further comprises the step of:

supplying a default attribute tag to ~~said~~ the meta-data element which has no attribute tag.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of combining meta-data associated with a plurality of images, wherein ~~one or more of said plurality of~~ the images each have associated therewith meta-data comprising at least one meta-data element each having at least ~~one~~ associated therewith an attribute tag which describes ~~an~~ a corresponding action to

be taken with said performed on the meta-data element when said plurality of in a case  
where the images are combined, the method comprising the steps of:

reading said ~~at least one~~ the attribute tag of each meta-data element to  
identify said the corresponding action; and

combining ~~the~~ similar meta-data elements ~~of the plurality of~~ associated with  
the images in accordance with said the identified action for those meta-data elements.

12. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the ~~at~~  
~~least one~~ attribute tag ~~includes~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is  
that the meta-data elements in question should be discarded ~~when~~ in a case where the  
images are combined.

13. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the ~~at~~  
~~least one~~ attribute tag ~~includes~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is  
that the meta-data elements in question should ~~both~~ be kept ~~when~~ in a case where the  
images are combined.

14. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the ~~at~~  
~~least one~~ attribute tags ~~includes~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is  
that the meta-data elements in question should be kept as a single element ~~when their~~ in a  
case where values of the meta-data elements are the same, ~~else~~ and discarded, ~~when~~ in a  
case where the images are combined.

15. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein in the event ~~a said~~ an image has associated therewith a ~~said~~ meta-data element having no attribute tag, then the method further comprises the step of:

supplying a default attribute tag to ~~said~~ the meta-data element which has no attribute tag.

16. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the default attribute tag ~~includes~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data elements in question should be kept as a single element ~~when their~~ in a case where values of the meta-data elements are the same, ~~else~~ and discarded, ~~when~~ in a case where the images are combined.

17. (Currently Amended) A method of updating meta-data associated with ~~transforming an a~~ digital image, wherein ~~said~~ the image has associated therewith meta-data comprising at least one meta-data element each having ~~at least one~~ associated therewith an attribute tag which describes ~~an a~~ corresponding action to be ~~taken with~~ performed on ~~said~~ the meta-data element ~~when said~~ in a case where the image is transformed, the method comprising the steps of:

reading ~~said at least one~~ the attribute tag of each meta-data element to identify ~~said~~ the corresponding action; and

updating ~~the at least one~~ each meta-data element of the image in accordance with ~~said~~ the identified action for that meta-data element.

18. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the ~~at least one~~ attribute tag ~~includes~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data elements in question should be discarded ~~when~~ in a case where the image is transformed.

19. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the ~~at least one~~ attribute tag ~~includes~~ is a tag which indicates that the action to be performed is that the meta-data element in question should be kept ~~when~~ in a case where the image is transformed.

20. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein in the event ~~said~~ the image has associated therewith a ~~said~~ meta-data element having no attribute tag, then the method further comprises the step of:

supplying a default attribute tag to ~~said~~ the meta-data element which has no attribute tag.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~An apparatus for combining digital image meta-data by augmenting meta-data associated with a digital image, wherein the meta-data comprises at least one meta-data element, the apparatus comprising:~~

means for adding a storing self-describing attribute tags with one, or more to each meta-data elements element, wherein each such attribute tag added to a meta-data element describing the describes an action to be taken with this performed on the meta-data

element and a similarly identified meta-data element from ~~a second digital image when~~  
another digital image in a case where the two images are combined.

22. (Currently Amended) ~~An apparatus for updating meta-data of an digital~~  
~~image by augmenting meta-data associated with a digital image, wherein the meta-data~~  
~~comprises at least one meta-data element, the apparatus comprising:~~

~~means for adding a storing self describing attribute tags with one or more to~~  
~~each meta-data elements element, wherein each such attribute tag added to a meta-data~~  
~~element describes an describing the action to be taken with this performed on the meta-data~~  
~~element when in a case where the digital image is transformed.~~

23. (Currently Amended) ~~An apparatus for combining meta-data associated~~  
~~with a plurality of images, wherein one or more of said plurality of the images each have~~  
~~associated therewith meta-data comprising at least one meta-data element each having at~~  
~~least one associated therewith an attribute tag which describes an a corresponding action to~~  
~~be taken with said performed on the meta-data element when said plurality of in a case~~  
~~where the images are combined, the apparatus comprising:~~

~~means for reading said at least one the attribute tag of each meta-data~~  
~~element to identify said the corresponding action; and~~

~~means for combining the similar meta-data elements of the plurality of~~  
~~associated with the images in accordance with said the identified action for those meta-data~~  
~~elements.~~

24. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for updating meta-data associated with a digital ~~transforming an~~ image, wherein ~~said the~~ image has associated therewith meta-data comprising at least one meta-data element each having ~~at least one~~ associated therewith an attribute tag which describes ~~an a~~ corresponding action to be ~~taken with said~~ performed on the meta-data element ~~when said~~ in a case where the image is transformed, the apparatus comprising:

means for reading ~~said at least one~~ the attribute tag of each meta-data element to identify ~~said the~~ corresponding action; and

means for updating ~~the at least one~~ each meta-data element of the image in accordance with ~~said the~~ identified action for that meta-data element.

25. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable ~~Computer readable~~ medium including a computer program for ~~combining digital image meta-data by~~ augmenting meta-data associated with a digital image, wherein the meta-data comprises at least one meta-data element, the computer program comprising:

code for adding a ~~storing~~ self-describing attribute tags ~~with one or more~~ to each meta-data ~~elements~~ element, wherein each ~~such~~ attribute tag added to a meta-data element describes an ~~describing the~~ action to be ~~taken with this~~ performed on the meta-data element and a similarly identified meta-data element from a ~~second digital image when~~ another digital image in a case where the two images are combined.

26. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable ~~Computer readable~~ medium including a computer program for ~~updating metadata of an~~ digital image by



augmenting meta-data associated with a digital image, wherein the meta-data comprises at least one meta-data element, the computer program comprising:

code for adding a storing self describing attribute tags with one or more to each meta-data elements element, wherein each such attribute tag added to a meta-data element describes an describing the action to be taken with this performed on the meta-data element when in a case where the digital image is transformed.

27. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable Computer readable medium including a computer program for combining meta-data associated with a plurality of images, wherein one or more of said plurality of the images each have associated therewith meta-data comprising at least one meta-data element each having at least one associated therewith an attribute tag which describes an a corresponding action to be taken with said performed on the meta-data element when said plurality of in a case where images are combined, the computer program comprising:

code for reading said at least one the attribute tag of each meta-data element to identify said the corresponding action; and

code for combining the similar meta-data elements of the plurality of associated with the images in accordance with said the identified action for those meta-data elements.

28. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable Computer readable medium including a computer program for updating meta-data associated with a digital transforming an image, wherein said the image has associated therewith meta-data

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comprising at least one meta-data element each having ~~at least one~~ associated therewith an  
attribute tag which describes ~~an~~ a corresponding action to be ~~taken with said~~ performed on  
the meta-data element ~~when said~~ in a case where the image is transformed, the computer  
program comprising:

code for reading ~~said at least one~~ the attribute tag of each meta-data element  
to identify ~~said~~ the corresponding action; and

code for updating ~~the at least one~~ each meta-data element of the image in  
accordance with ~~said~~ the identified action for that meta-data element.

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